



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 20, 2013

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senate
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heitkamp:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the effect of the Commission's Quantile Regression Analysis (QRA) on rural carriers. We appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As I have made clear since the day I arrived at the Commission, one of the core elements of communications policy that must guide the work of the FCC is the critical need for all Americans to have access to high-speed broadband networks. Access denied is opportunity denied. To that end, I am a firm believer in the importance of universal service, and I agree that the Commission must make timely decisions in order to provide regulatory certainty and create incentives to further efficient investment in broadband networks.

My colleagues and predecessors at the Commission worked hard to develop the landmark Universal Service Fund (USF) reforms adopted in 2011. The work to implement the reforms to date has included the steps you note to temporarily relieve the impacts of the QRA benchmarks on small rate-of-return carriers. At the first Open Meeting that I held as Chairman last week, the Wireline and Wireless Bureaus and the Office of Native Affairs and Policy provided the Commission with a status update on USF reform implementation. I was impressed with the work they have done to get broadband to millions of people for the first time, but I know much work remains.

The Commission has unanimously adopted a vision for a broadband-focused Universal Service Fund. We must of course be open to modifications to the reforms if it is clear that particular rules are not serving their intended purpose. Commissioner Clyburn said it best, "We should remain open to pursuing course corrections where necessary." Where we are making progress we will continue moving full steam ahead. Where the reforms are not achieving their intended goals, we will make changes based on sound data.

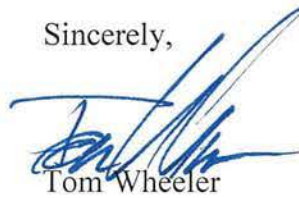
Assuring that the opportunities of the new network extend to all Americans is one of the principal challenges we face at the FCC. We exist at an important moment when the USF is evolving to support 21st century services. I know I speak for all my colleagues in saying we look forward to continuing the work of reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program – as

Page 2—The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp

well as other components of the Fund – and to working with stakeholders including rural carriers and consumers, to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

November 20, 2013

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
United States Senate
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Inhofe:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the effect of the Commission's Quantile Regression Analysis (QRA) on rural carriers. We appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As I have made clear since the day I arrived at the Commission, one of the core elements of communications policy that must guide the work of the FCC is the critical need for all Americans to have access to high-speed broadband networks. Access denied is opportunity denied. To that end, I am a firm believer in the importance of universal service, and I agree that the Commission must make timely decisions in order to provide regulatory certainty and create incentives to further efficient investment in broadband networks.

My colleagues and predecessors at the Commission worked hard to develop the landmark Universal Service Fund (USF) reforms adopted in 2011. The work to implement the reforms to date has included the steps you note to temporarily relieve the impacts of the QRA benchmarks on small rate-of-return carriers. At the first Open Meeting that I held as Chairman last week, the Wireline and Wireless Bureaus and the Office of Native Affairs and Policy provided the Commission with a status update on USF reform implementation. I was impressed with the work they have done to get broadband to millions of people for the first time, but I know much work remains.

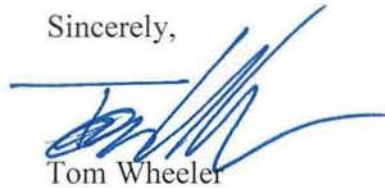
The Commission has unanimously adopted a vision for a broadband-focused Universal Service Fund. We must of course be open to modifications to the reforms if it is clear that particular rules are not serving their intended purpose. Commissioner Clyburn said it best, "We should remain open to pursuing course corrections where necessary." Where we are making progress we will continue moving full steam ahead. Where the reforms are not achieving their intended goals, we will make changes based on sound data.

Assuring that the opportunities of the new network extend to all Americans is one of the principal challenges we face at the FCC. We exist at an important moment when the USF is evolving to support 21st century services. I know I speak for all my colleagues in saying we look forward to continuing the work of reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program – as

well as other components of the Fund – and to working with stakeholders including rural carriers and consumers, to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

November 20, 2013

The Honorable John Isakson
United States Senate
120 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Isakson:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the effect of the Commission's Quantile Regression Analysis (QRA) on rural carriers. We appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As I have made clear since the day I arrived at the Commission, one of the core elements of communications policy that must guide the work of the FCC is the critical need for all Americans to have access to high-speed broadband networks. Access denied is opportunity denied. To that end, I am a firm believer in the importance of universal service, and I agree that the Commission must make timely decisions in order to provide regulatory certainty and create incentives to further efficient investment in broadband networks.

My colleagues and predecessors at the Commission worked hard to develop the landmark Universal Service Fund (USF) reforms adopted in 2011. The work to implement the reforms to date has included the steps you note to temporarily relieve the impacts of the QRA benchmarks on small rate-of-return carriers. At the first Open Meeting that I held as Chairman last week, the Wireline and Wireless Bureaus and the Office of Native Affairs and Policy provided the Commission with a status update on USF reform implementation. I was impressed with the work they have done to get broadband to millions of people for the first time, but I know much work remains.

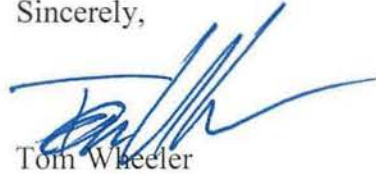
The Commission has unanimously adopted a vision for a broadband-focused Universal Service Fund. We must of course be open to modifications to the reforms if it is clear that particular rules are not serving their intended purpose. Commissioner Clyburn said it best, "We should remain open to pursuing course corrections where necessary." Where we are making progress we will continue moving full steam ahead. Where the reforms are not achieving their intended goals, we will make changes based on sound data.

Assuring that the opportunities of the new network extend to all Americans is one of the principal challenges we face at the FCC. We exist at an important moment when the USF is evolving to support 21st century services. I know I speak for all my colleagues in saying we look forward to continuing the work of reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program – as

well as other components of the Fund – and to working with stakeholders including rural carriers and consumers, to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

November 20, 2013

The Honorable Tim Johnson
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the effect of the Commission's Quantile Regression Analysis (QRA) on rural carriers. We appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As I have made clear since the day I arrived at the Commission, one of the core elements of communications policy that must guide the work of the FCC is the critical need for all Americans to have access to high-speed broadband networks. Access denied is opportunity denied. To that end, I am a firm believer in the importance of universal service, and I agree that the Commission must make timely decisions in order to provide regulatory certainty and create incentives to further efficient investment in broadband networks.

My colleagues and predecessors at the Commission worked hard to develop the landmark Universal Service Fund (USF) reforms adopted in 2011. The work to implement the reforms to date has included the steps you note to temporarily relieve the impacts of the QRA benchmarks on small rate-of-return carriers. At the first Open Meeting that I held as Chairman last week, the Wireline and Wireless Bureaus and the Office of Native Affairs and Policy provided the Commission with a status update on USF reform implementation. I was impressed with the work they have done to get broadband to millions of people for the first time, but I know much work remains.

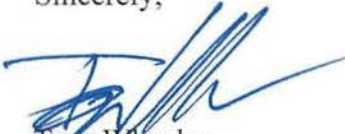
The Commission has unanimously adopted a vision for a broadband-focused Universal Service Fund. We must of course be open to modifications to the reforms if it is clear that particular rules are not serving their intended purpose. Commissioner Clyburn said it best, "We should remain open to pursuing course corrections where necessary." Where we are making progress we will continue moving full steam ahead. Where the reforms are not achieving their intended goals, we will make changes based on sound data.

Assuring that the opportunities of the new network extend to all Americans is one of the principal challenges we face at the FCC. We exist at an important moment when the USF is evolving to support 21st century services. I know I speak for all my colleagues in saying we look forward to continuing the work of reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program – as

well as other components of the Fund – and to working with stakeholders including rural carriers and consumers, to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

November 20, 2013

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the effect of the Commission's Quantile Regression Analysis (QRA) on rural carriers. We appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As I have made clear since the day I arrived at the Commission, one of the core elements of communications policy that must guide the work of the FCC is the critical need for all Americans to have access to high-speed broadband networks. Access denied is opportunity denied. To that end, I am a firm believer in the importance of universal service, and I agree that the Commission must make timely decisions in order to provide regulatory certainty and create incentives to further efficient investment in broadband networks.

My colleagues and predecessors at the Commission worked hard to develop the landmark Universal Service Fund (USF) reforms adopted in 2011. The work to implement the reforms to date has included the steps you note to temporarily relieve the impacts of the QRA benchmarks on small rate-of-return carriers. At the first Open Meeting that I held as Chairman last week, the Wireline and Wireless Bureaus and the Office of Native Affairs and Policy provided the Commission with a status update on USF reform implementation. I was impressed with the work they have done to get broadband to millions of people for the first time, but I know much work remains.

The Commission has unanimously adopted a vision for a broadband-focused Universal Service Fund. We must of course be open to modifications to the reforms if it is clear that particular rules are not serving their intended purpose. Commissioner Clyburn said it best, "We should remain open to pursuing course corrections where necessary." Where we are making progress we will continue moving full steam ahead. Where the reforms are not achieving their intended goals, we will make changes based on sound data.

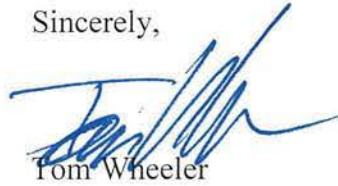
Assuring that the opportunities of the new network extend to all Americans is one of the principal challenges we face at the FCC. We exist at an important moment when the USF is evolving to support 21st century services. I know I speak for all my colleagues in saying we look forward to continuing the work of reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program – as

Page 2—The Honorable Jeff Merkley

well as other components of the Fund – and to working with stakeholders including rural carriers and consumers, to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over the printed name.

Tom Wheeler